



HR1135

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Dr.
4 Gwindelle Wilson Ponder of Chicago, who passed away on January
5 30, 2008; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Gwindelle Wilson Ponder, an award-winning
7 distinguished educator who championed education as a high
8 school teacher, college professor, and devoted mother proudly
9 celebrated her 80th birthday at The Congregational Church of
10 Park Manor in June of 2007 with more than 200 fellow church
11 members, former colleagues, sorors, friends, neighbors, and
12 family; this joyous celebration reflected her unwavering
13 commitment to her family, church, and community, as well as
14 theirs to her; and

15 WHEREAS, She was the daughter of the late Reverend and Mrs.
16 (Flossie Farmer) Dennis N. Wilson, who both nurtured her
17 spiritual growth and development; Reverend Wilson, the
18 patriarch of the prominent Wilson family, was the preeminent
19 minister of Ebenezer AME Church for 10 years; Flossie Farmer
20 Wilson, a college-educated, successful minority female
21 business owner, owned a home-based beauty shop and was a top
22 award-winning entrepreneur for Sarah Coventry, the first
23 direct selling fashion company in the world; Flossie Farmer

1 Wilson was related to James Farmer, one of the founders and
2 leaders of the civil rights organization, Congress of Racial
3 Equality (CORE); in 1998, President Bill Clinton awarded James
4 Farmer the Congressional Medal of Freedom; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Ponder grew up in Charleston, South Carolina,
6 where she graduated from Avery Institute in 1944; she received
7 a B.A. in mathematics from Fisk University in 1948, an M.A. in
8 mathematics from Columbia University in New York in 1951, and a
9 Ph.D. in mathematics/education from Heed University in Broward
10 County, Florida in 1978; and

11 WHEREAS, She married Alvin F. Ponder II and three children
12 were born to this union: Dr. Alvin F. Ponder III, Mr. Darryl D.
13 Ponder, and Anita J. Ponder, Esq; although this union did not
14 survive the test of time, she was always devoted to the
15 education, development, and success of each of her children;
16 she touched the lives of countless persons from all walks of
17 life who benefited from her caring guidance, support, humor,
18 and splendid candor; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. Ponder taught mathematics in the Chicago
20 Public School system for 16 years, 11 of which were at Wendell
21 Phillips High School; she was subsequently a mathematics
22 professor at Kennedy-King College for 19 years; she achieved
23 the rank of professor in 1985 and had bestowed upon her the

1 Distinguished Professorship Award in 1988-89; a Distinguished
2 Professor from each City College is selected by the faculty and
3 administrators of that college and is awarded for the
4 professor's outstanding achievements in teaching, creative
5 leadership, dedicated service, and the enhancement of the
6 intellectual and cultural life of the academic community; and

7 WHEREAS, Some of Dr. Ponder's noteworthy accomplishments
8 at Kennedy-King include service on the Faculty Council
9 Committee, Rank Committee, Registration and Recruitment
10 Committee, Faculty Evaluation Committee, Mentor Advisor for
11 Retention Committee and Convocation Committee; she coordinated
12 the mathematics laboratory, tutored students, and cochaired
13 the Welch Memorial Mathematics Competition; she frequently
14 arranged for successful persons to speak to her classes to
15 share their professional experiences and to supplement the
16 students' intellectual and motivational enrichment; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Ponder had an impressive civic and community
18 service record, serving on the Stewardship Council, the June
19 Circle and the Music Committee of The Congregational Church of
20 Park Manor; she co-chaired the Membership Committee of the
21 Chicago Area Fisk University Alumni Association; and she was a
22 judge for Chicago Public Schools Academic Olympics; she chaired
23 the Ninth Annual Tea of the Women's Auxiliary Board of
24 Provident Hospital, and she raised the largest-ever amount of

1 funds for the hospital at a single event; she was the Vice
2 President of West Chesterfield Garden Club; a member of Alpha
3 Kappa Alpha Sorority, Theta Omega Chapter; a member of the
4 Vernon Park Community Council; a member of the Women's Board of
5 DuSable Museum of African-American History; the Vice President
6 of the Chicago Area Fisk University Alumni Association; and a
7 member of the American Rose Art and Charity Club; she also
8 served as a community representative for the first Local School
9 Council at Harlan Community Academy; and

10 WHEREAS, Beyond the educational arena, Dr. Ponder had other
11 noteworthy interests and talents, including being an
12 outstanding cook and hostess, an enthusiastic gardener, an
13 accomplished seamstress, a competitive bridge player, an avid
14 world traveler, an African-American art collector and one of
15 the best dressed-women in Chicago; because she lived life to
16 its fullest and enjoyed every moment of it, her death, despite
17 her age, seems quite untimely to those who knew and loved her;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Surviving Dr. Ponder are her daughter, Anita J.
20 Ponder, Esq.; her two sons, Dr. Alvin F. Ponder III and Mr.
21 Darryl D. Ponder; her grandson, Mr. Brian Ponder; her three
22 sister-in-laws, Dr. Mildred Ponder Stennis, Ms. Ann Wilson, and
23 Ms. Gladys Wilson; her nieces and nephews, the Honorable Denise
24 Wilson-Taylor, Dr. Dennis Norman Wilson (Marva), Decatur Ward

1 Wilson II (Cheryl), Mr. Dexter Norman Wilson (Renee), and Dr.
2 Lynette Wilson-Phillips (Jonathan); her grandnieces and
3 grandnephews; her cousin, Vivienne Cornell; her mother's
4 adopted granddaughter, Mrs. Jamesetta Boyd Nichols (Raymond);
5 and numerous other relatives and friends; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
8 mourn, along with her family and friends, the passing of Dr.
9 Gwindelle Wilson Ponder; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Dr. Gwindelle Wilson Ponder as an
12 expression of our sincere sympathy.